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# MISTAKES

IN

# TEACHING,

BY

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*Inspector of Public Schools, Toronto, Canada.*

"If a teacher at all times keep a high aim steadily before him, and struggle incessantly to retain it in spite of repeated failures, HIS VERY MISTAKES, carefully noted and thoughtfully corrected, will lead to gradual improvement and ultimate excellence." J. R. BLAKISTON.

SECOND EDITION, WITH CONTENTS AND INDEX.

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# Notices of Former Editions.

For young teachers I know of no book that contains, in the same compass, so much matter directly bearing on their work, and capable of being immediately utilized. They cannot make a better investment of fifty cents. M. A. Newell, State Supt., Maryland.

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The "Mistakes in Teaching" has come and I have read it with interest. It is a useful book, and should be in the hands of all teachers. It points out clearly those things in which nearly all of us are guilty. I hope the book may meet a ready and extensive sale. B. M. Reynolds, Supt. Schools, Fairbault, Minnesota.

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In accordance with the above recommendation, nearly TEN THOUSAND copies have been ordered for the Iowa County Institutes of 1881.

## PREFACE.

Many good books have been written on the subject of teaching. Most of them, however, are too theoretical to be of much practical use to teachers in Public Schools. A knowledge of the general principles of education is desirable, but a thorough acquaintance with the details of school work is essential to success in teaching. Familiarity with the general principals of navigation would be of little service to a Captain on the Mississippi.

The first step toward progress in any department of work, is to learn to avoid the *mistakes* one is liable to make. Young teachers should know the rocks which lie in their course before they begin to teach. Experience will then show how to shun them.

A long experience in the training of teachers convinced the author that men of different ages and nationalities fall into the same errors in management, discipline and method. To point out some of these is the aim of this book. A similar manual may be expected which will treat of the mistakes made in teaching particular subjects.

*Toronto, December*, 1879.

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# Mistakes in Teaching.

## CHAPTER I.

### Mistakes in School Management.

**It is a mistake to neglect the details of school management.** What are regarded by many as "minor points," unworthy of attention, in reality form the distinction between a well-managed and a poorly conducted school. Minor points they may be, but the mistake consists in regarding them as therefore unimportant. Mr. J. R. Blakiston, one of the most thoughtful of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools in England, says: "The least gifted may take heart when he bethinks him, that success in school management

depends mainly on *watchful and unremitting attention to little details and on conscientiously grappling with every difficulty as it arises.*" Without system no management can be complete, and in this case the paradoxical rule, the *lesser includes the greater*, is the correct one.

He who is careful in the details of school management will, in nearly all cases, attend carefully to matters of larger scope. He who attends to the "minor" points will not need to attend to so many weighty matters, because they will not turn up. The principle of "take care of the pence and the pounds will take care of themselves" applies in school management. There can be no doubt that uniform attention to particulars in connection with the deportment of the pupils in the yard, in line, and in the school-room, is a most valuable disciplinary agent in forming their characters. Habits are formed which will do much to decide the degree of success to which the pupils will attain, when they become men and women.

Among the "minor" matters to which

it is of *vital importance* to attend are the following:

1. *Lining the pupils at the close of all recesses and marching them in regular order to their school-rooms.* This should be done in a uniform manner, and without haste, pushing or any disorder. For lining, a walk a single plank in width may be laid down for each class, if the whole yard is not planked.

2. *Pupils should be taught to stand and walk with the head erect, shoulders well back, hands at the sides, and eyes to the front.* The habit of walking with the hands behind, while it keeps the shoulders back, unfits the pupils for walking properly on the street, in the drawing-room, or in the ranks as soldiers. The experienced authors of *How to Teach*, say well: "Education is unfinished until the physical powers are brought into subjection to the understanding and the dictates of morality and social refinement. Children should be taught *how to sit, to stand, to move, to walk.* Rules are required for this; but they need to be only few and simple, and the nice and watchful observa-

tion of children renders it quite easy to enforce them, provided they are not capriciously applied. Children must first be taught them, and then never permitted to violate them without admonition or correction."

*It is wrong to tell pupils to "walk on their toes."* This is very often done by young teachers in order to prevent noise. In fact, School Boards sometimes give directions in their rules to have pupils walk in this way. It is not right to do so: *(1)* because it makes pupils hobble; *(2)* because it leads to the turning in of the toes in an awkward manner; and *(3)* because it prevents an easy and elegant gait in walking. Pupils can walk naturally without making noise, and they should be compelled to do so.

3. *They should be taught how to go up and down stairs.* Most pupils go up or down three steps, while they ought to go but one. Two or three lines can walk on a proper school stair-way side by side, and thus no time will be lost by a steady uniform step. Rapidity of step is, however,

by no means the worst evil in the walking of pupils on a stair-case. It will take a great deal of care and watchfulness to secure proper *lightness of step*. Pupils are inclined to stamp, when marching in time on a floor, or in any place where they can make a good deal of noise. They step as though striking snow from their heels in winter. They must be trained to *hold* the feet with the muscles of their lower extremities and place them gently in the proper positions, instead of allowing them to *drop* like inanimate weights.

4. *They should be made to stand up to answer questions or to read.* Common politeness would require this. The change from the sitting posture, will be of great physical advantage to the pupils. The vocal organs have freer play when the pupil is standing than while sitting. Standing up should be done promptly. The pupil should not *roll* up or *grow* up.

5. *They should be taught to hold the book in the left hand when standing to read.* "Book in left hand, right foot slightly drawn back," is the uniform rule given by au-

thorities for the position of a reader. If the book is held in both hands, it is usually brought much *too close to the eyes*, and the tendency is to round the shoulders.

6. *All work should be kept far enough from the eye.* Near-sightedness is frightfully on the increase. Statistics carefully made in Europe and America show that, while only a fractional percentage of children are afflicted with *myopia* when they enter school, about 60 per cent. of those who leave it at eighteen are more or less affected by it. This is a startling statement, and ought to cause every humane teacher to consider carefully what he can do to avert such a dreadful result. He can at least try to have plenty of light admitted to the school-room, *only from the left side of the pupils*, or from left of rear, and *never from the front.* He can also by constant watchfulness insist that the eyes should be kept far enough from slates, reading books, copy books, etc.

7. *If pupils are brought out in classes, they should stand in line, not lean against the wall, or on desks, etc.* In fact whenever a pupil

stands up in school he should stand on both feet and avoid leaning.

8. *The passing of copy books, pens, etc., should be done in a precise and orderly manner.* Writing books should be collected by being passed along the rows from side to side, and taken up by one monitor after they have been passed. He should turn the piles on the several desks "end to end," so that he can place them readily on again when required. They should always be handed from pupil to pupil in the same order, so that they might be passed with every eye in the room blindfolded, and yet each pupil receive his own book with unerring certainty.

9. *Habits of neatness, cleanliness and punctuality should be insisted on.* These may do more for the pupils than the mere knowledge imparted in school. No paper or rubbish of any kind should be allowed to litter the floor. Each pupil should be responsible for the part of the floor nearest to his own desk. The teacher should frequently examine the desks of his pupils to see that they arrange their books properly.

10. *No pupil should be allowed to leave his seat without permission.* If one has this privilege all must be allowed to do so, and all might choose to do so at the same time. Monitors may have a standing permission to attend to their duties without referring to their teachers every day.

11. *The pupils should have a uniform method of doing certain things.* "Oh dear! you will destroy their originality and make them mere machines by compelling them to do everything in a fixed way." So talk some teachers who are unable to control their classes, and have therefore to find some excuse for their neglect. Does system wrevent the exercise of originality? Will methodical habits cramp the "free exercise of individuality?" Any originality or individuality so trammelled, must be of an evil nature which ought to be restricted.

Pupils should place slate and books on their desks in exactly the same way. There must be one way, which is less noisy and more appropriate than others. Let the teacher decide on the best plan of

doing the work, and then carry it out in the most regular manner. There should be an unvarying signal for each movement in taking or returning books, cleaning, and passing pens, etc. The aim should be to save time and avoid noise; anything more than this is "over-drill."

**It is a mistake to omit yard supervision.** Pupils who are not controlled in the yard, are not easily managed in the school-room. If children learn evil habits or hear impure or profane language at school, they do so chiefly during the recesses. The presence of the teacher in the play-ground should restrain what is wrong, without in any way checking the interest in healthful sports and innocent recreation. Rough games which interfere with the comfort of those not engaged in them, or endanger the limbs of those who are playing, would not be indulged in under the eye of the teacher. Without marching up and down with the air of a soldier on guard, he prevents wanton destruction of school property, or intentional injury to clothing, such as kicking

of hats, and secures due attention to propriety of language and courtesy of manner.

**It is a mistake for the teacher to hold himself aloof from his pupils while they are playing.** The presence of the teacher in the yard should have a double effect: it should repress the evil and develop the good. The child never reveals his whole nature as he does when playing. His physical, mental and moral powers are all then called into vigorous exercise. Professor Payne says: "But has the instinct for play no deeper significance? Is it appointed by the Supreme Being merely to fill up time?—merely to form an occasion for fruitless exercise?—merely to end in itself? No! I see now that it is the constituted means for the unfolding of all the child's powers. It is through play that he learns the use of his limbs, of all his bodily organs, and with this use gains health and strength. Through play he comes to know the external world, the physical qualities of the objects which surround him, their motions,

action, and reaction upon each other, and the relation of these phenomena to himself; a knowledge which forms the basis of that which will be his permanent stock for life. Through play, involving associateship and combined action, he begins to recognize moral relations, to feel that he cannot live for himself alone, that he is a member of a community, whose rights he must acknowledge if his own are to be acknowledged. In and through play, moreover, he learns to contrive means for securing his ends; to invent, construct, discover, investigate, to bring by imagination the remote near, and, further, to translate the language of facts into the language of words, to learn the conventionalities of his mother-tongue. Play, then, I see, is the means by which the entire being of the child develops and grows into power, and, therefore, does not end in itself."

Dr. Harris says: "There is a great deal of talk about utilizing play, but play, strictly as play, should not be utilized; there should be room for the spontaneous play of the child, with no restraint whatever."

The teacher who fails to recognize these facts and make the most of them, never becomes acquainted with his pupils thoroughly, and fails to obtain his most natural control over them. In every situation, except in the play-ground, there is some portion of the child's nature veiled. How important then that, instead of checking the playful spirit of innocent and healthful childhood, the teacher should have sufficient sympathy for it to develop it and turn it into right channels. What true dignity there is, too, in the playing of the full-grown man with the head of an adult, and the heart and spirit of a boy! How different is this genuine dignity from the enamelled variety which cannot bend without cracking, and exposing the coarser or weaker material beneath. The teacher who cannot play with his pupils without "putting on the brakes" is to be pitied. One of the most valid reasons for not placing large boys in the charge of a female teacher is, that she cannot, as a rule, take part in their games and exercises.

**It is a mistake to be continually re-**

**pressing the activities of childhood.** There are three classes of educators. One dams up the fountains of the free tendencies of childhood, and turns the stagnant waters back upon the child life, so that they drown it out; another goes to the other extreme, and says, "Let Dame Nature have her way unrestrained, let childhood unfold itself." He lets the waters flow freely enough, but they unfortunately have a natural tendency to flow in improper directions. Like real water, they flow "down hill," and far too frequently transform what might have been a fertile valley into a marsh. The proper method recognizes the necessity of a full development of the natural faculties and the free exercise of them, but it gives them direction without seeming to do so. It selects the channel in which the stream should flow, and inclines each little rill of character in that direction, so that as the stream flows onward it gains more breadth and depth and momentum, until it becomes a mighty river, bearing on its bosom freights of blessing toward the great sea of life.

Some teachers are horrified if pupils laugh in the school-room. The discipline that cannot stand a frequent good laugh, is unnatural and unsound. Giggling and tittering should be forbidden as unbecoming, but a genuine hearty laugh indulged in by both teacher and pupils for a proper reason, may be repeated often with the best results even to the discipline of the school.

**It is a mistake to stand too near the class.** In a well-appointed school the teacher has a platform about a foot high, extending across the end of the room, from which he teaches. This will give him a position from which he will be able to see every pupil. If he leaves it and moves close to the front row of pupils, he cannot take in the whole class with a single steady glance. Those nearest to him will be unseen by him, and they will moreover be unable to see him. The results are loss of control by the teacher, and loss of teaching by the pupils, as no pupils can listen long with profit to a teacher at whom they cannot look.

Whether in the school-room or in the yard, *the teacher should always take such a position as will enable him to see every pupil at the same time.* He should retain his position without fail when "lining" or "drilling" in the yard.

**It is a mistake to take hold of a pupil to put him in his place in line.** If the teacher stands as he should, so as to see all his pupils at the same time, he cannot make this *grievous error.* To shake a boy violently into position arouses in him only bad feelings. It can only be defended on the plea of punishment for deliberate defiance, or laziness in executing a movement. In both cases the temptation to seize the offender is very great. It is better to resist the temptation, however. In the first case, the delinquint should be sent from the ranks altogether, and punished according to the nature of the offence; in the second, he should be placed in the "awkward squad" for extra drills.

**It is a mistake to give too many demerit marks.** There are continual showers of bad marks in some classes.

Bad marks for conduct, and bad marks for lessons. The teachers of such classes often complain, that "their pupils do not attend to the marks given." It would be surprising if they did, or their parents either. If the worst pupil in a well-organized school, receives more than five or six misdemeanor marks in a month, there is cause for alarm. The teacher should feel ashamed. He has been giving marks to save himself trouble, or because he is afraid to grapple with a troublesome case in the right way.

If a large number of bad marks is given for lessons, *it is the teacher's fault in nine cases out of ten.* The lessons are too difficult or too long; sufficient explanation has not been given; or else the pupils have not been taught *how to study*, or have not had proper incentives to study laid earnestly before them.

**It is a mistake to censure trifling errors too severely.** Some teachers pour out their "vials of wrath" to the last drop on the heads of those whose offences are not of a very serious nature. Their stern-

est countenance and harshest language are called into requisition to find fault with the little unfortunate who carelessly lets fall his slate, or turns to look at his neighbor behind him. Pupils of such teachers soon learn to disregard even a command, unless it is accompanied by a thunder-bolt. They place themselves in an awkward position, too, for they are unable to adapt the severity of their censure to the circumstances of the case. This has a confusing effect on the moral natures of children, by leading them to believe that all offences are equally grave in their nature.

It is of the utmost importance that *the teacher should never confound the accidental with the incidental, or thoughtlessness with design.*

**It is a mistake to complain or grumble much.** If there is one teacher who more than any other is certain to be disliked by pupils, parents, trustees, and inspectors, it is the inveterate grumbler. He would dislike himself if he had the honor of his own thorough acquaintance.

He does not know how tiresome his complaining becomes. "I never had such bad pupils in my life; I do not know whatever to do with them," he says, when some one in authority visits his school; and his pupils despise him for it, as they do the tale-bearer of their own age. His visitor, too, regards him with pity, as one who seems to glory in his own utter weakness or incompetency. No large class of genuine *boys or girls* ever studied hard from the love of study; or deported themselves in a uniformly gentle and becoming manner, because of their natural amiability. It is the teacher's duty to stimulate their love of knowledge, and to develop the better side of their natures, so that these qualities may become strong aids in managing and controlling his classes. Each pupil may require diffrent treatment in some respects. So much the grander does our work as teachers become.

*No teacher who scolds, or sneers, or grumbles, can ever have the sympathy of his pupils; and without it he can never control them, or secure their best efforts in their school work.* He

who recognizes and judiciously commends the feeble efforts of his pupils will be certain by this means to induce greater zeal and earnestness.

**It is a mistake to allow whispering on the plea of "allowing pupils to assist each other."** Whispering during study hours is an unmitigated evil, and those who permit it make a grievous error There are some who, seeking for a justification of what they are too weak or too indolent to prohibit, defend whispering on the plea that "pupils should be allowed to assist each other in their work."

This plea is fallacious for *two reasons*,—

1. *Whispering can not be restricted to the limit named.*

5. *Children can not teach each other.*

Is the art of teaching so simple that every child is capable of practising it? No indeed. Few adults naturally possess the power of teaching, and it requires a long and careful course of training to make a man of average ability and good culture even a fair teacher. How ridiculous then to allow every pupil to assume the duties

of a teacher, when he chooses. But, if the plea is a good one, we must allow all pupils the privilege, for it will not do to show partiality. There can be no favored few with unsealed lips, while those of others are locked. What good would result even in the higher classes, if the pupils were allowed to assist each other? Brown can not work his example, and calls on Smith who sits beside him, for help. Smith says, "Multiply the 4967 by 13 and extract the square root of the product, etc." He merely *tells* him what to do. Has Brown been developed in any way by the process? Will he always have Smith by his side through life to *tell* him when to multiply, divide, etc., in solving his business problems?

The teacher, who would allow this highly educative *(?)* process to be performed by their pupils, would be shocked to find them copying from each other, while solving their problems.

Wherein lies the difference? The difference is simply this. Telling is a noisy method of copying. Their results so far

as securing answers, and the mental growth of the pupils, are the same. If either plan has the advantage in securing the advancement of the pupil, it is undoubtedly copying, because Brown must *do more work for himself* if he copies, than if he is told by Smith. Copying is also the quieter method, and of the two evils is decidedly the less objectionable.

**It is a mistake to allow disorder in the school-room during recess.** Pupils should not be allowed even to remain in the school-room during recess, unless the weather is unfavorable. Old and young, male and female, should take the opportunity of breathing the fresh air, due precaution as to clothing, etc., being taken when the weather is cold.

During cold weather, those who have any chest affliction may be permitted to remain in and rest, but they should not be allowed to move around the room, unless they do so in a systematic and orderly manner as directed by the teacher.

If the weather is too severe for the class to go out, the relaxation should be taken

as usual, and the time devoted to physical exercises, the windows being open for ventilation. Such exercises may be taken with pleasure and profit to all concerned, at the end of each hour for a couple of minutes.

**It is a mistake to invoke higher authority except as a last resort.** Assistant teachers often send for the head master to settle trivial affairs. Wise head masters will, of course, prohibit such childishness. A principal cannot afford to neglect his own class to obey all the calls of weak or whimsical assistants. If a teacher could only realize how he humiliates himself in the eyes of his pupils by unnecessary appeals to the head master, or the trustees, he would adopt that means of escaping from a difficulty on very rare occasions. How can pupils be expected to respect a person, who becomes merely a self-appointed spy, to watch for wrong doing in order that he may call in the head master to inflict punishment?

**It is a mistake to confound giving**

**information or evidence with tale-bearing.** There are many things which a teacher ought to know, which he cannot possibly learn without the assistance of his pupils. No proper rule should be intentionally violated without the matter being brought to the teacher's knowledge.

Some teachers hedge their pupils in with so many cramping rules, that they cannot be natural and indulge in healthful boyish amusements without constant terror of breaking some of them. The rules for the guidance of pupils, when not under the eye of the teacher, should be few, and should relate to *the protection of property*, or the suppression of vice If school property is injured, defaced or destroyed, or if the purity or morality of the pupils generally is being ruined by the continued bad language or bad habits of a few, it is of the highest importance that the teacher should be made acquainted with the facts of the case. The tone of the school should be such that a pupil on doing wrong would report himself, if instructed to do so by his fellow pupils, who are justified in interfering to protect them-

selves or their common property. If he refuses to do so, it then becomes their plain duty to report the matter, unless it be an offence of a comparatively trifling nature, for which the guilty one expresses regret, and which he promises not to repeat. To give information in a case of this nature is in no way related to "tale-bearing" in the usual meaning of that term. "Tale-bearing" means giving information with mean motives: to expose a rival, or to secure his punishment. On the other hand, to give proper information requires the highest moral courage, and frequently necessitates self-sacrifice for the general good.

There are some people who condemn as unmanly the giving information, when asked by the teacher conducting an investigation into some case of wrong-doing. Whatever may be the opinion held in regard to the voluntary statement of information, there certainly is only one right view in which to regard a pupil's duty when required to give evidence by his teacher. "Unmanly" indeed! Is it un-

manly for a witness to give evidence in court? Is not the school a miniature world, and a teacher's investigation a school court?

While "tale bearing" from mean and selfish motives, ought to be condemned as unmanly and ungenerous in the extreme, the teacher will do well to spare no pains to develop a spirit of frankness and honor in his pupils, which will lead them to give him assistance in every proper way to control evil even when he is not present.

Wise teachers never seek occasion for making investigations of a petty nature.

**It is a mistake for the teacher to be late.** It sets the pupil a bad example, and is bad policy. Pupils will certainly not be punctual, if the teacher is not. They will be guided by his actions instead of his words, or rather they will estimate the value he sets upon his own instructions by the way he follows them. He will thus lose his power over his pupils in one of the most important directions in which he can ever influence them. But it is bad policy for him to be late, even for his own

sake. He should be at the school at least a quarter of an hour before the time for opening in summer, and half an hour in winter. If pupils get disorderly in the school-house before the arrival of the teacher, it need not surprise any one to find them difficult to control during school hours. Individual morning greeting for each pupil, is one of the best ways for gaining an influence over the class Their peculiarities of temperament may be recognized and treated then better than at any other time during the day.

**It is a mistake to be careless about personal habits.** The teacher should be in all respects a model for his pupils. His manner and habits are sure to be imitated by them. The best lessons he can give on cleanliness and tidiness are not lectures but good examples. He should do more than be a pattern, however. He should talk a little about manners, habits, methods of dressing, etc., and he should *act* a good deal. Inspection, without being a formal ceremony, ought to be invariably made daily. The boots may be noticed in line

before school; the faces and dress at the first "good morning" glance and the hands and nails during writing hour. All may be noted without having a set time for critical inspection. Delinquents, after having been carefully warned previously, ought to be sent to attend to the matters neglected. If it be a small matter it may be attended to in the lobby, where the school apparatus for washing, etc., is kept. If a pupil often fails in any particular he should be sent home, that the matter may be brought to the notice of the parents. All parents whose good opinion is worth having will be under an obligation to a teacher who calls their attention to any bad habits on the part of their children.

**It is a mistake to sit while teaching.** It is better for the health to stand, and move around as much as may be done without disturbing the class. The ceaseless tramp, tramp, of some teachers while speaking to their pupils is to be avoided.

A teacher has more control of his class when standing than while seated. He is also certain to be more lively and energetic in teaching.

Of course if he feels wearied, he should sit down for a while. Ladies especially may be excused for doing so.

**It is a mistake to give a command when a suggestion will do instead.** Suggestion is a golden key that unlocks many a gate in the management of *pupils and parents*, which would forever resist the battering ram of Demand and Compulsion. Suggest and recommend any improvement in dress, style, manner, conduct, or in any department of school work or management, giving reasons in a clear manner, and at least one-half of your pupils will carry out your suggestion, either to please you, or because they are convinced that they will be benefitted by doing so. With one-half on your side, it will not be very difficult to establish a public opinion in a quiet way (the quieter the better) in favor of the change. The seeds having been planted, let them grow. You only need to be patient and the good work will spread. Probably only two or three in a school will require much pressure to lead them to do what is desired.

**It is a mistake to allow pupils to be frequently troublesome without notifying their parents.** It is an axiom that parents and teachers should work in harmony. So far as possible and judicious, the school discipline should correspond to that of the home. The teacher should respect the rights and opinions of the parents, and they in turn should sustain the authority of the teacher. These desirable ends can be secured only by some system of communication between the parties concerned.

There are always in a school a few pupils who, without being guilty of any offences of a very serious character, give the teacher a vast amount of trouble. No other class of pupils causes so much worry and annoyance as these, and after a time it usually becomes necessary to take decided action and suspend the offenders, or admininister a severe punishment of some kind. The punishment, whether by suspension or otherwise, is of course much too great for the last act of wrong-doing. The transgression is merely "the last straw that

breaks the camel's back;" the penalty "covers a multitude of sins." The parent of the offending child makes enquiry as to the cause of the extreme punishment, and receives from his own child or from others, if he asks them, a statement of the last offence only. He naturally concludes that the teacher is unreasonably severe, if not excessively unjust; and unfortunately in too many cases he expresses his opinions in an emphatic manner in the presence of his child. Sometimes indeed he makes known his sentiments in a highly *dramatic* manner before the whole school. In either case the result must be a loss of respect for the teacher on the part of his pupils. Nor can the parent be blamed for the difficulty, unless he has been promptly and faithfully notified of the previous wrong-doings of his child, as they accumulated. It is well that these notifications should be on paper, and that they should be returned to the teacher signed by the parent, and kept for reference when necessary. If the pupil is old enough, it is best that he should write the note according to di-

rections given by the teacher. This will save time for the teacher, and have a good effect on the pupil. Of course in most cases such a note should be signed by the teacher, not the pupil. Occasionally the communination may be from the child himself.

**It is a mistake to annoy parents unnecessarily.** When calling the attention of parents to any bad behavior of their children, or notifying them of any carelessness or inattention to the cleanliness or tidiness of their dress or persons, the teacher is often unnecessarily sharp and unkind in his language. So far as it is possible to avoid it, the feelings of parents should not be wounded at any time by the teacher. He cannot hope to govern his class easily and in a proper way, unless he has the sympathy of the parents, and he cannot have that, if he is discourteous or unduly severe towards them. Conciliation should be his motto. Respectful or even deferential interviews or correspondence, will work wonders in awakening an interest in school matters on the

part of parents, and in securing their co-operation and support. The teacher who can say to a parent, "I regret that Tom is absent so frequently, he is a smart boy and it gives the other children such an advantage if he is not present; or "It is a pity that such a pretty boy as James should ever forget to wash his face and comb his hair" will readily secure his objects, without in any way making the parents feel humiliated.

**It is a mistake to show temper in dealing with parents.** Teachers will very often have great provocation to anger, on account of the injustice and sometimes rudeness and impertinence of parents. They will write the most cruelly unjust accusations, and make the most bitter remarks about "paying taxes to keep the teacher in bread and butter," etc. They will even come to the school to browbeat and abuse the teacher. Under all these and similar circumstances he is the best manager who shows a calm and deliberate nature. He cannot be blamed for feeling anger, but he must not show it. He should

remember that the parent, in nearly every case, reasons correctly according to the information he has received. He has heard only one side of the case, and that is usually greatly exaggerated, if not grossly misrepresented. True, he should not decide until he has heard both sides, but affection for his child, whom he regards as unjustly treated, and whose rights he as a parent is bound to maintain, makes him forget this. He receives the child's statements as facts, and naturally gets excited. It is safe to say that very few parents get angry at teachers without sufficient reason, if the child's evidence is taken as correct. Granted that the facts are as stated, the reasoning of parents is nearly always right, and their anger but the expression of their chivalrous feelings, as the natural protectors of the children God has given them. But the facts are not usually as related by the pupils. Without being guilty of any deliberate falsehood, they are not likely to give a correct account of a punishment they have received, or any circumstances with which they are directly connected.

Herein lies the secret of the teacher's power over angry parents, if he uses it judiciously.

If an indignant parent finds an angry teacher he receives the clearest proof possible that the teacher is unreasonable; and is certain to obtain sufficient evidence to corroborate his child's statements. An angry teacher will do as any other angry person does. He will be sure to say something unkind or unjust, and in this way give the parent, what he had not before, a good ground for complaint. If the two charged batteries come together there is certain to be an explosion.

If the teacher is cool, and in correspondence or by personal interview shows the parent that his child's version is incorrect, his victory is speedily secured, and one such victory is sufficient. A parent so convinced is convinced forever. Now, no teacher can make a parent believe his child to be guilty of misrepresentation, unless he first convinces him that he is absolutely impartial, and without the slightest degree of animosity or prejudice

against him. He cannot do this, if he shows any temper in his dealings with the parent. If, however, his manner is firm but quiet, and his language definite but moderate, he at once relieves the parent of the impression that he has a prejudice against the child, and the matter is amicably settled. The teacher cannot achieve so great a triumph in any other way. He does not merely defeat an enemy, he secures a friend.

**It is a mistake to dispute with an angry parent before the class.** If the teacher gets angry, too, the pupils witness an unseemly quarrel; if he does not, some of his class will think he is afraid. In either case the work of the school is interrupted, and the respect of the pupils for the authority of the teacher is lessened. They cannot regard his power as very great, if a parent may come and question it in an offensive and contemptuous manner. If a parent comes for an explanation of any misunderstanding in regard to school management the teacher should receive him courteously *at the door*, give

his class some work to occupy it for a few minutes, and step outside to make the necessary explanation. If the parent is exceedingly unreasonable, the teacher should quietly inform him that his time *must now be devoted to his class*, but that if the parent will call again after school, or receive a call from him, he will be able to give the matter further consideration.

**It is a mistake to make spiteful remarks before the class about notes received from parents.** It shows a petty spirit to do so, and allows the class to see that the teacher is annoyed and worried by the remarks of the parents. His dignity is lowered, and when his pupils are not in his presence they will laugh at him. It is unfair to parents to read their notes or part of them before a class. These notes are private communications, and as such they should be regarded as too sacred for public comment.

## CHAPTER II.

### MISTAKES IN DISCIPLINE.

**It is a mistake to try to teach without having good order.** No teacher should think of *teaching* at all, until he has established between himself and his class a perfect understanding regarding this matter; until he has clearly shown his pupils that it is necessary that one person should be absolutely master, and that he is the person entitled to that position by virtue of his office, his superior intelligence, experience, and force of character. Without order in his affairs and among those he employs, no business man can hope to be successful. Without the perfect order called discipline in an army it is a disorganized mob, incapable, unmanageable, and at the mercy of its foes.

Without order in a school, at least one-half a teacher's power is wasted, partly through the inattention of the scholars, and partly in reducing the disorder to what some teachers regard as *endurable* limits. Experience has proved this, and therefore every good teacher insists on having good order before *attempting* to teach. "The husband who starts in his matrimonial career as lieutenant never gets promoted." A teacher is rarely promoted in a school in which he has not earned his position at the close of the first day. There is a lamentable weakness about a teacher who allows his scholars to form the public opinion of his school, and establish his character independent of him.

**It is a mistake to confound "securing order" with "maintaining order."** Many teachers forget, when taking charge of a new class that they are dealing with strangers, on whose sympathy and affection they have no claim. They often lose control of their pupils on the first day by practising the very principles which are of highest service in securing the best dis-

cipline. They appeal to instincts which are slumbering, and to motives which, so far as they are concerned, have no existence. Pupils are at school on the opening day to study the "new teacher," not their lessons, and the more incomprehensible and non-committal he is the more they will respect him. Like their seniors, they will regard mysterious silence as profundity, and a self-contained manner as indicative of great reserve power. No rational teacher should expect to win the love of his pupils at first sight. During the first few days his great aim should be to show them by his *actions* and *manner*, not by *words*, that he understands himself, his pupils, and their relations to each other. To baffle their curiosity in regard to himself, is the first step toward securing their respect. Beyond this only three things are absolutely necessary during the first week :—

1. He must show that he can see everybody at all times, and that it is impossible to do wrong without being detected.

2. He must be decided in awarding pun-

ishment for an intentional offence. A severe whipping promptly and coolly given on the first day, may assist materially in doing away with corporal punishment.

3. He must prove that he is master of the subjects he has to teach.

A lady once subdued a rebellious pupil by offering him her cane with the request that he would whip her. She had previously shown him and the whole class in a clear and feeling manner that he was guilty of a serious offence for which some one must be punished. At the right moment she surprised him with her strange request, and completely overpowered him. This was natural, because her pupils were young, and she had gained their affection by a long course of kindness. The story got into the papers, and an ardent youth, about to take charge of a class of grown-up boys, determined to adopt the young lady's plan. He opened school on the first morning with a fervid address, full of what boys call "taffy," and calmly waited for the hour to arrive, when by a single exhibition of his generosity he would gain

permanent sway over their grateful hearts. He was confident that his address must have made an impression, and that the noble boys would appreciate his self-sacrificing spirit. The hour at length arrived, and with due ceremony he called the culprit before him, spoke to him in most feeling terms, showed the necessity of punishment for the offence, stated that rather than punish a "dear pupil" he would submit to be punished himself, and finally presented the delinquent with a bundle of rods with the request that he would select therefrom the largest and whip his "dear teacher." He turned his back expecting to hear cries of penitence, but instead he was astounded by shouts of encouragement to the obedient pupil, who had faithfully carried out instructions, and was now wielding the largest rod with judgment and power, in which invigorating exercise he was quickly joined by as many pupils as could get rods from the bundle. Those who could not be accomodated pelted him with every available missile, and finally threw him out, after emptying the ink bottles on his head.

Kindness and affection are the strongest elements of a teacher's power, but they need a stable foundation to rest upon.

**It is a mistake to suppose that children like to have their own way at school.** No greater mistake could be made. Children like order better than disorder. So would all grown people, if they had been properly trained at school. Children are most joyous and happy, and therefore most thoroughly educated, in those schools where the discipline is strict without being severe. There is no quicker way for a teacher to lose the respect of his pupils than by over-indulging them.

They will not chafe long under just restraint. Control develops reverence.

**It is a mistake to think that order means perfect quiet or stillness.** Many classes are quiet through sheer listlessnes or dullness. What is needed in a school is the order of life, not the order of death. Order means having every child in school attending to his own duty, and attending to it, of course, in the quietest possible manner. So long as no individual in a

school is attending to another's business, or doing anything to attract the attention of any person else, efficiency should not be sacrificed for the sake of silence. A good stiff breeze is better than a dead calm. The breeze is all right if it does not come in squalls. Perfect order may be quite in harmony with a considerable amount of noise. In a factory, for instance, although the noise of machinery may be deafening, and the bustling of the workmen may appear quite confusing to an outsider, everything is usually in the most perfect order. Order does not necessarily mean repression. The order needed in school is work systematized. This is genuine order, the only kind that will last.

**It is a mistake to try to startle a class into being orderly.** Some teachers strike the desk; stamp on the floor; call "order, *order*, ORDER;" or ring the bell to cause quietness. A thunder-clap startles us into stillness for a few moments, but even thunder would soon lose its effect, if controlled by some teachers. Disorderly

pupils should be subdued, not terrified. It would be a poor way to calm a nervous child by firing cannon near it. A teacher must be deliberate, not impulsive and explosive. If he wishes to secure good order, he must be orderly himself. Attention gained by making any sudden noise is only of a *temporary* kind. The noise of the pupils yields for a time, but very soon it re-asserts itself. To be valuable, attention must be *fixed*. Teachers should, of course, never forget that giving fixed, active attention is an *exhaustive* exercise, and that relaxation in some form — music, free gymnastics, or both combined—should be given to pupils at frequent intervals.

**It is a mistake for the teacher to try to drown the noise of his pupils by making a greater noise himself.** Some teachers attempt to force out disorder by talking in a loud tone, and in a high key. They may avoid hearing any noise except that made by themselves in this way, but they are certain to increase the noise made by their pupils. The pupils will have to speak louder in order

to hear each other. A low tone is much more certain to produce quietness than a high tone. There are certain noises which render children nervous and irritable. The noise made in filing a saw, and that made by a teacher talking in a high key, are two of them.

**It is a mistake to call for order in general terms, however quietly it may be done.** Disorder always begins with one or two, and no rational teacher allows it to proceed until it has spread throughout the whole class before stopping it. It should be quieted as soon as it commences. This should be done by a meaning look, a question quietly asked, or in some natural way that will attract the attention of no person but those immediately concerned. It is enough that the disorderly pupil should lose his time, without compelling the whole school to listen to an absurd method of quieting him.

**It is a mistake to make too many rules.** Some teachers make so many rules, that they cannot remember them themselves. Their pupils forget them

too, and violate them without intending any wrong.

The breaking of the law should be a most serious offence. Children will not be very good citizens, if they regard the violation of laws as a trifling matter. They cannot avoid coming to this conclusion, if a teacher has so many rules that he forgets to punish for neglecting them; or if they are of so unimportant a character, as not to command the respect of the pupils.

There should be few cast iron rules beginning with "Thou shalt," or "Thou shalt not." The rule should state general principles, and each one should cover a whole class of specific acts.

Rules in detail should not be formulated in a code either written or printed.

No rule should be issued until some wrong-doing makes it necessary. The very prohibition may suggest the wrong course to the pupils.

Pupils should learn rules *as they should learn everything else*, by experiencing the necessity of them, and by putting them in

practice as they learn them. The rules that will be best learned and most consistently obeyed are those that are not spoken or written or printed, but regularly *acted* by the pupils under the guidance of a wise teacher.

The pupils should have the reason for rules explained to them so far as to enable them to see their justness; indeed judicious teachers may allow their scholars to assist them in framing rules.

While the teacher should issue as few restraining rules as possible to his pupils, he must not neglect to define clearly their duties towards each other and to the school, nor to explain fully the nature and results of the offences which they commit.

**It is a mistake to be demonstrative in maintaining discipline.** Some machines make a perpetual jarring noise while running. Some schools are disciplined in such a way as to make them really disorderly. Teachers are often disorderly in attempting to secure order. They may succeed in obtaining a kind of

discipline, but they lose much valuable time in getting it; and when secured it lacks many of the beneficial influences of good discipline in forming the characters of the pupils. Visitors at schools will frequently hear the teacher cannonading their pupils with such orders as these: "Take down your hand, sir;" "Turn around in your seat, James;" "Sit up, Mary;" "Attention, Susan;" etc. These are *commands*, and the wise teacher will never even make a *request* when a *suggestion* will accomplish his purpose. There is one fact always noticeable in schools in which the teacher has to resort continually to the above method of controlling his class. His work is never done. The supply of disorder never runs out. In fact he does not notice and check, in most cases, one-half the wrong-doing that goes on, and at its best the order of the pupils is only indifferent. Even if the best of order on the part of the class could be secured by such means, the disorder of the teacher would neutralize its good effects.

There are classes always in order, whose teachers do not *seem* to be controlling them

at all. The teacher is teaching and the pupils attending in a quiet and respectful manner, when a visitor enters, and he leaves after a stay of a couple of hours without having *heard* a single child named in connection with the violation of a rule of any kind. The teacher was controlling the class, but neither class nor visitor was painfully conscious of the fact.

What causes the difference between the two classes? Is the noisy, restless, forgetful class to be blamed for its delinquencies? Certainly not. The teacher is responsible in every sense. Let the two teachers exchange classes, and after a couple of months the pupils will have altered their characteristics. One teacher strives for order merely for its own sake, the other maintains discipline that he may teach. One talks, preaches, and scolds about order, and demands it with threats of "impositions" or punishments in case of refusal or neglect by the pupils; the other secures "the silent co-operation of natural laws, by good organization, by careful forethought, and by quiet self-control."

It may be said by some, that the power of governing without *apparent* effort is a natural gift, possessed by few, and beyond the acquisition of those not so blest by nature. Undoubtedly some possess this power to a greater extent than others, but all may learn the principles that underlie good government; and no one should presume to teach, until he is able to practise those which are essential.

The methods of *securing* order on first taking charge of a class may vary, as they will depend to a considerable extent on circumstances, but good discipline can only be *maintained* by the most careful attention to the physical comfort, the instincts, and the mental characteristics of the children.

**It is a mistake to speak in too high a key.** Probably no other error increases the labor of the teacher and the disorder of the class to so great an extent as this. Children soon cease to attend to a teacher with a loud voice pitched on a high key. It is not surprising that they do so. A loud voice soon becomes monotonous, and

loses its influence in securing attention and order. It has, indeed, a positively injurious influence on a class in two respects:

1. It induces a corresponding loudness and harshness of tone on the part of the pupils, and leads them to speak and read in a forced, unnatural manner. In this way their voices lose all their sweetness and half their influence. "Loudness," says Emerson, "is always rude, quietness always gentle."

2. It produces an irritating effect on the nervous systems of children, which prevents their being quiet and attentive.

The voice should be pitched rather *below* than *above* the natural key, and used with only *moderate force* in the school-room. It is then much more impressive than a high, loud voice, and infinitely more effective in securing good discipline. Children will learn much more rapidly too if the teacher speaks in a quiet conversational tone.

It must be remembered, however, that weakness of voice must not be confounded

with good modulation. Weakness of voice indicates some corresponding weakness in body or character. Proper modulation, on the contrary, conveys the impression that the speaker thoroughly understands himself and his surroundings, and has a large amount of reserve force ready for any emergency. *Decision* and *sternness* are not synonymous.

**It is a mistake to try to force children to sit still even for half an hour in the same position.** It is right to insist that all the pupils shall sit in a uniform position while engaged at the same lesson. It is wrong even to allow them to sit for a minute in *ungraceful*, *unhealthful* positions. The teacher cannot be too exacting in these particulars, but the same position should not be continued too long. This is especially true in the case of little children, whose bones are not hardened. The muscles will weary of sustaining the weight of the body in any position too long, and the weight being thrown on the flexible bones will bend them out of their proper shape.

The judicious teacher will not attempt to *restrain* the restlessness of junior children, but will give it a natural outlet. There is no other so good as light calisthenic exercises, accompanied by singing. These are exceedingly interesting to the pupil, and give the needed exercise and change to the muscles that have been wearied in one position. If teachers would give their pupils two minutes' restful exercise before each lesson, or at the close of each hour, the pupils would make more rapid progress in their studies, and the teacher's work in preserving order be greatly lessened. "In the majority of cases they break artificial rules in obedience to powerful instincts, which the teacher has failed to press into service. They are largely under the influence of the instinct of activity, and unless some safe provision be made for satisfying this instinct, they will be irresistibly impelled to satisfy it in ways of their own. They will fidget when they are expected to keep still: they will grow weary of being treated as mere passive reservoirs into which knowledge is to be perpetually pumped, and will seek oc-

cupations,mental or bodily,for themselves; and in a variety of ways they will disobey the teacher who persists in this unwise defiance of natural laws. It is absurd to blame them for their disobedience. They cannot help it. They did not make themselves, and the laws of their being are only partially under their control."

**It is a mistake to allow pupils to play in the school-room.** There are many stormy days, when no reasonable teacher would compel his pupils to go out at recess. Instead of doing so, it is the custom in many schools to allow the pupils to have their recess and play in the school-room. It is desirable that a recess should be given for relaxation from study. The hygienic laws relating to both mind and body demand frequent rests from labor. If they were more frequent in schools, and of shorter duration, there would be more work, less scolding, and better order in them. Relaxation and unrestrained play are not synonymous, however,nor is the one the natural consequence of the other. If children play as they

choose in a school-room they are certain to make too much noise, and endanger the safety of desks and other school property. The worst effect of such a license is the loss of proper feelings of respect for the school-room. While children should not regard the school-room as a place of solitary confinement or look upon the teacher with dread, they should feel that there are proprieties of conduct and manner inseparably connected with entering the outer door of a school building. They should never be allowed to play even in the halls of a school house. They may be allowed to converse, or even move around the room in a quiet and regular manner. There is no harm, for instance, in pupils of the same sex walking in couples around the outside walls during the recess, provided they all walk in procession in the same direction, and with a slow, measured step. Pupils may be very properly taught to march by the teacher at these times, or they may perform calisthentic exercises in time with singing. Promiscuous playing around the school-room should be prohibited also on the part of those pupils who

wish to stay in at noon, or who arrive too early in the morning. It is best, if possible, to have assembly rooms in the basement of the building, but if these cannot be secured one room should be set apart for a lunch or assembly room. A teacher should always have charge of it, and pupils should understand clearly that *good behavior* is the one condition on which they are allowed to remain in it.

**It is a mistake to use a bell as a signal for order.** It is purely a *time* or *movement* signal. Even the *occasional* ringing of the bell for order is a mistake. It disturbs every pupil, while perhaps only two or three are offending, and after a time loses its effect, because it speaks directly to no one, and gives in general terms to a whole class what should be given particularly to certain individuals. The bell is a valuable aid in securing discipline. It may be used with great profit instead of the teacher's voice, as a signal for commencing, changing, or closing exercises; or for standing up, sitting down, assembling, dismissing, etc., but it never

should be used to give a direct command for order. *It should never convey a command that does not apply with equal force to each member of the school.*

**It is a mistake to lose sight of the class.** Control asserts itself chiefly through the *lip*, the *tongue* and the *eye*. They should be used in the inverse order to that in which they are named. The eye should be the exclusive medium of control, so far as possible; the tongue may be called to its aid in cases of emergency; the lip should be used very sparingly. The lip expresses firmness, combined with scorn or contempt, and these are sure to stir up active antagonism, rather than submission. A pupil may be, and often is, forced to yield without full obedience. The eye alone can convey a message of power and conciliation at the same time, and these are the elements of genuine control.

If a pupil feels that his teacher's eye is *constantly* and quietly taking note of all that is going on in his class, he cannot fail to be conscious of its controlling

power. Unless he is defiant or exceedingly thoughtless, he will need little more than the teacher's untiring eye to restrain him. The eye can be cultivated and its range of vision greatly widened. Few teachers have the power to *see* and *watch* every pupil in a class of fifty at the same instant, but every teacher may acquire the ability to do so. It is astonishing to what extent clearness of lateral vision may be developed without rolling the eyes from side to side. The influence of the eyes is neutralized by an uneasy nervous movement or fixed stare. The seeing should be done wihout any apparent effort, but it should be done, and done unerringly. Even when using the blackboard the teacher should avoid turning his back to his class.

**It is a mistake to be variable in discipline.** Some teachers are intermittent in their exercise of "will power." They are fully charged with energy and force one day, but seem to have lost connection with their character batteries on the next. Steady, even, regular, uniform control is

the kind required. In the school-room and in the yard, the teacher's influence should be supreme, whether he himself is present or absent. He must never be a tyrant, he should always be a governor.

He should carefully study his proper social and legal relationship to the pupils, their parents, and the school authorities. He should stand on a foundation of solid rock, and be ready for prompt action in cases of emergency. Promptness and deliberation should go hand in hand. Promptitude and haste or excitement are not synonymous. Hesitation and timidity on the part of a teacher, will stir to life germs of rebellion which otherwise might have been left to die for lack of nutriment.

While a teacher should always pay due respect and attention to the advice of his friends, he should never allow either the counsel of friends or the opposition of foes to make him deviate from the course which he knows to be the right and just one. Many men fail because when a wave of opposition meets them they feebly yield to its power and aimlessly drift with it ; when

if they had met it bravely and remained firm it would soon have passed them and left them better for its washing. The teacher may yield many times with profit to his school and himself, if he does it gracefully, but he can never do so when the question of control is at stake. He must then assert his "will power" in a most determined manner, without making himself offensive or tyrranical.

**It is a mistake to get excited in school.** A man opens the gates of his strong-hold when he becomes angry. A teacher to exercise control must be calm and patient. The quality of "will power" is of great importance, the quantity of it at a teacher's disposal is of far more consequence. It must wear well. There is a dignity and a majesty in the patient assertion of the right and the ability to control, which never fail to command respect. It is well, especially when taking charge of a new class, not to try to compel absolute order too suddenly. So long as pupils are ready to do what the teacher wishes, he will, if a reasonable man, overlook slight

offences until good conduct has become a habit.

Obedience on any terms is better than disobedience, but willing obedience must be obtained by the teacher if he wishes to benefit his pupils. If "will power" is exerted in a noisy and violent manner it is offensive; if it is of the fussy kind it excites ridicule. It must be calm if it would secure control beneath whose placid surface no rebelion lurks in ambush.

**It is a mistake to be satisfied with order which lasts only while the teacher is present.** There are teachers who control their pupils merely by the exercise of "will power." It is necessary to do so sometimes, especially when the teacher has lately taken charge of the class, The teacher's "will power" should always be held in reserve for an emergency, but he should control his class by the expenditure of the smallest possible degree of it. His engine should not always be running at its highest pressure. The pupils have powers of self control which require development; and they need to be trained to

do right from a sense of duty, not from the consciousness of subordination to a superior *will*, or fear of punishment, when the teacher is present to detect the wrong.

Many boys go astray after leaving home, because they have been controlled by the sweetness of a mother's nature, or the strength of a father's will. In either case they were not acting on principle in doing right, and no element of self-government had been developed in them. Their restraining influences were external to themselves, hence they were rudderless on removing beyond their power.

The same result is found in many a school whose pupils are fairly orderly in the presence of the teacher, but uncontrolled when he leaves the room. The remedy is to be found in using influences external to the pupils as sparingly as possible, and developing to the fullest extent those which may be awakened in the pupil himself.

**It is a mistake to give an order without having it obeyed by all to whom it is given.** A great deal of dis-

order exists in some schools, because the teacher, while changing exercises, or dismissing his class, does not wait to have one order obeyed before giving another. Whether the signals be given by word of mouth, by numbers, by touching a bell, or otherwise, every pupil should have fully completed the motion indicated by "one" before "two" is given. If any other course is adopted, confusion and disorder are inevitable, and the pupils learn to pay little attention to the teacher's commands.

Obedience to an order, and submission to a rule may be quite different. The one should be *prompt* and *decided*, the other should be *intelligent* and *voluntary*.

**It is a mistake to treat pupils as though they were anxious to violate the rules of the school.** If a teacher does not respect his pupils, they will not respect him. Confidence is necessary on the part of both teacher and pupils. A threat implies that the teacher does not trust his pupils, and prevents the class having sympathy with him. "It is better to assume that your pupils will be eager

to carry out your wishes, and so impose upon them the obligation of honor, than to take it for granted that the only motive which will deter them from disregarding your wishes will be the fear of a penalty." Blind confidence must, however, be distinguished from honest trust in those who have not proved unworthy.

**It is a mistake to ridicule a pupil.** It is wrong to do so for bad conduct, neglect of lessons, or any breach of school discipline. The pupil so treated loses to a certain extent the respect of his classmates, and, what is of more consequence to himself, he frequently sinks in his own estimation. Sarcasm inflicts a poisoned wound which does not heal. No personal or family weakness or peculiarity ought to be publicly referred to by the teacher. Hon. J. P. Wickersham, in his masterly work on School Economy, says, "Sarcastic remarks, or such names as numskull, block-head, dunce, etc., etc., do not become a teacher in speaking either to or of his pupils." Do not make a pupil lose his own self-respect, or expose him to con-

temptuous remarks by his companions. To ridicule a feeble attempt may prevent a stronger effort.

**It is a mistake to punish without explanation.** Teachers sometimes say, "Smith, take a misdemanor mark," or "Mary, stay in at recess," or "Brown, hold out your hand," etc., without taking time to explain why the mark or the prohibition or the whipping should be given. "It would waste too much time; I could do very little else in my school," is the justification given for such a course. The answer given is likely to be correct in schools in which such a method of punishment is adopted. The teacher who adopts such a course will soon have sufficient reason to conclude from his stand-point that explanations would "waste time."

Punishment is a judicial act, and it should be administered judicially. A boy has a right to know why he receives punishment, before the punishment is inflicted. If the teacher does not take the trouble to give him this explanation in a perfectly candid manner, he gives the

pupil just cause for regarding him as a petty tyrant, who punishes merely for the personal gratification it affords him. Punishment produces good results, not according to the amount of pain caused, but in proportion to the clearness with which pupils see the nature of the offence and the justness of the penalty. Pain, by itself, causes anger, resentment, and a desire for revenge; therefore, no teacher should cause pain without taking care to neutralize its evil effects. Whipping alone is brutal and brutalizing. A pupil who receives such treatment naturally grows sullen, and becomes doggedly resentful. He believes that his teacher has a dislike to him, and he cannot be blamed for coming to this conclusion. It is the teacher's fault. Parents get their impressions of the teacher from their children, and so he loses the confidence of both pupils and parents. There is nothing that parents so quickly resent as injustice to their children. Whether the injustice be real or imaginary is not of the slightest consequence so long as the impression is made on their minds. The teacher's influence is often paralyzed,

therefore, by causes which he has himself set in motion. He is shorn of more than half his power if the parents of his pupils lose confidence in his unswerving justice. One of the quickest ways to secure the distrust of the public is to inflict punishment of any kind and leave the pupil to decide its causes, as well as to suggest the teacher's motives.

It is well to remember that the pupil directly concerned is not the only one interested in punishment. Great care should be taken to make the whole class see the justice and fairness of punishment before administering it. They should not be allowed to think that they have a right to decide that punishment shall not be given by the teacher as he deems proper; but they should be led to understand very clearly that the teacher punishes solely for the benefit of the individual or the general good, that his decisions are uniformly and impartially based on equitable principles, and that he is always glad to state his reasons for awarding punishment of any kind. If the class does not approve

of the punishment, evil results are produced.

Punishment inflicted hastily will often be unjustly given. If the teacher cannot explain satisfactorily the reason for a punishment, he should doubt the propriety of imposing it. The attempt to state his reasons may often lead him to modify his decisions. Horace Mann says, "I confess that I have been *amazed* and *overwhelmed* to see a teacher spend an hour at the blackboard explaining arithmetical questions, and another hour on the reading or grammar lesson ; and in the meantime,as though it were only some interlude, seize a boy by the collar, drag him to the floor, castigate him, and remand him to his seat; the whole process not occupying two minutes." A certain amount of *formality* should accompany the infliction of punishment.

The marking sheet on which are entered the marks for misconduct or imperfect lessons should always be hung near the door, so that the pupils in passing may see at a glance if any mark has been accidentally

or incorrectly placed opposite their names. Only in this way can full confidence be established in the accuracy of monthly reports to parents.

**It is a mistake to whip for disciplinary purposes merely.** Whipping should be used as a reformatory agent only. It is better for boys than confinement in jail. It should rarely if ever be administered to girls. The teacher who resorts to frequent whipping as a means of securing discipline, is either excessively lazy or weak. He can have very little tact or will power. A city superintendent says, "I find that the good order of the classes varies with the amount of whipping done, in inverse ratio. Much whipping, bad order; little whipping, better order; least whipping, best order." This will be found to be the experience of all who have given the question a fair trial. There are some who have relied solely on whipping for many years, and who have, therefore, no other means of control but the cane. They and their pupils are to be pitied. They were never qualified to perform the high duties of teachers.

**It is a mistake to whip pupils in a merely formal manner.** Some teachers hold that the *disgrace* of receiving punishment constitutes its chief restraining power. This is a grievous error. If the opinion were a correct one it would be one of the strongest reasons against corporal punishment. It is certainly not the teacher's aim to bring disgrace on his pupils. Boys laugh at the credulity of a master who takes it for granted that they feel intensely humiliated by whipping. Whip rarely but severely. Whip only for serious or repeated offences, but let the whipping be of such a character that it will not need to be repeated often.

**It is a mistake to punish by pulling a child's ears, slapping his cheeks, etc., etc.** Punishment should subdue. The horrible idea that the chief object of punishment is to cause pain is not accepted by modern teachers. The punishments referred to above always cause rebellious feelings, and nothing but the comparative weakness of the pupil ever prevents his prompt resentment of such an

indignity by the personal chastisement of the teacher. Such punishments are improper:

1. Because they indicate haste, bad temper and inhumanity on the part of the teacher.

2. Because they are inflicted without any previous explanation of their necessity and justness to the pupils. Explanations should precede punishment.

No teacher should ever torture his pupils by pinching, etc., or by compelling them to keep the body long in an unnatural position.

## CHAPTER III.

### MISTAKES IN METHOD.

**It is a mistake to put questions to pupils in rotation.** Many commence at the head of the class, facing the pupil there, and after putting him through as though he were the only pupil in the class, they get over number two in a similar manner, and so on to the end of the class, if happily that part be reached before the time for closing the lesson. They can teach but one at a time. The class of such a teacher should consist of *one little* pupil, so that he could see the whole of it at once.

**No pupil should ever know who is likely to receive a question until it has been given.** No name should be mentioned, no motion made or look given to indicate who is to answer, until the question has been asked. Many teachers,

while proposing a question, make the mistake of looking steadily at the pupil whom they expect to answer it. This should be so carefully avoided as to leave every pupil completely in the dark as to the intentions of the teacher. Each pupil should know that he may be asked to answer *every question*. Every one will thus be compelled to attend all the time; while if questions are asked in rotation, a pupil, after answering his question, may discuss the circus, or the last lacrosse match, or the next base ball match, or any other *appropriate* topic that may chance to come into his mind, until his turn is coming again. It is impossible to maintain good order in a natural way by such a method of teaching.

**It is a mistake to repeat a question for the sake of those who do not hear it the first time.** To do so is simply an extra inducement to the scholars to be inattentive. If a pupil knows that your question is to be asked once only, he will listen to it the first time. If he knows that, when you wish him to answer, you

will shake him to get his attention, and then repeat your question, he will wait for the shaking. A pupil deserves more punishment for not knowing the *question* than for not being able to give the *answer*.

**It is a mistake to look fixedly at the pupil who is reading or answering.** If there is one pupil who does not need watching, he is the one. He is certain to be attending to his work. We should attend to him with the ear, to all others with the eye. Many teachers, while teaching a reading lesson, divide their attention about equally between their book and the pupil who is reading. Such teachers never have good order or interested classes. In reality, neither the book nor the pupil reading should need the attention of the teacher's eye.

**It is a mistake to be a slave of any text-book.** The teacher should understand principles, not certain statements, or rules, or examples. The teacher who merely hears recitations of words prepared in a text-book has a poor estimate of his true function. The pupils should do con-

siderable independent work in the study of their text-books, but the teacher should test the results of their study by requiring them *to make a practical use of it*. He should not be satisfied with knowing that they can use it *with their tongues only*. The text-book can never be a substitute for the teacher.

**It is a mistake to assign lessons without previously explaining them.** One of our most important duties as teachers is to *teach children how to study*, and what to study most carefully in connection with each lesson. To assign a lesson to a child without giving him some idea of its leading features—what you will expect him to know, or explain or prove next day, and how and where he can obtain most light on difficult parts,—seems a good deal *like sending him into a wilderness to fetch something he has never seen, and which you have not even described to him.*

**It is a mistake to assign much home work to young children.** The youthful mind should not be forced to make too great or too long continued effort in study

If a child's brain is actively employed for five or six hours per day in school, it must have nearly reached the "fatigue point," beyond which mental exertion is positively injurious. Physically and mentally it is better for the child to have but little home study until he reaches the age of twelve. Home study at any period should consist of work which the child can do for himself without the aid of the teacher. By doing it at home school time is saved, and the pupil is allowed to do his fair share of the work of learning. It is of vital importance, however, that neither the ambition of the teacher nor the vanity of the parents should be allowed to dwarf the intellects of children by forcing them to make too great or too constant mental effort while young. There is no doubt that the majority of those who have attended the average school have had their faculties blunted by such a course. Professor Huxley says: "The educational abomination of desolation of the present day is the stimulation of young people to work at high pressure by incessant and competitive examinations. Some wise

man (who probably was not an early riser) has said of early risers, in general, that they are conceited all the forenoon, and stupid all the afternoon. Now, whether this is true of early risers in the common acceptation of the word, or not, I will not pretend to say; but it is too often true of the unhappy children who are forced to rise too early in their classes. They are conceited all the forenoon of life, and stupid all its afternoon. The vigor and freshness which should have been stored up for the purposes of the hard struggle for existence in practical life, have been washed out of them by precocious mental debauchery,—by book-gluttony and lesson-bibbing. Their faculties are worn out by the strain put upon their callow brains, and they are demoralized by worthless, childish triumphs before the real work of life begins. I have no compassion for sloth, but youth has more need for intellectual rest than age; and the cheerfulness, the tenacity of purrose, the power of work, which make many a successful man what he is, must often be placed to the credit, not of his hours of industry, but to

that of his hours of idleness, in boyhood."

**It is a mistake to assign a lesson and not afterward test the class to see whether it has been prepared.** To do so is to encourage the pupils to neglect their lessons regularly. The act of assigning a lessson should convey to the minds of the pupils, without any words to that effect, the statement, "I will examine you on this portion of work to-morrow, or at our next lesson on this subject." Some teachers even require written exercises to be brought in some subjects, and forget or neglect to call for them. Some call for them without ever returning them or reporting their corrections in any way. These teachers are training their pupils to be careless and indifferent, and often dishonest. They are also sinning against themselves,for they are certain in this way to secure the disrespect of their classes. Pupils soon detect the weakness of their teachers. They love system and definiteness of purpose. They respect a teacher who attends to his own duty thoroughly and at the right time. They lose confi-

dence in a teacher who forgets or neglects a duty.

**It is a mistake to continue a lesson too long in the school room.** The attention will flag if confined too long to one subject. The minds even of adults should be rested occasionally while studying. Recreation at the end of each hour for five minutes will enable the student to make more rapid progress than he would otherwise make. The rests should come more frequently in junior classes. Change of work is one way of securing rest. Some lessons may be continued longer than others, with profit. Those that exercise the memory only, will not retain interest so long as those which bring more of the faculties into play.

**It is a mistake to think that one teaching of a subject will be sufficient.** It is necessary not only to *repeat* but to *review*. One of the most discouraging things in the experience of a young teacher is to find that, a month after teaching a subject, his pupils seem to remember very little about it. He

may have labored faithfully and skillfully to explain the mystery of fractions, for instance; he may be proud and justly proud of his success; but if he rests satisfied with a fine explanation of the subject, he will find to his great disappointment that he has been merely writing in the sand. He should have regular reviews at times marked on his time table, and in addition he should briefly review previous lessons before beginning a new one in any subject. The lesson of yesterday should be reviewed before beginning the lesson of to-day. It is only by thus repeating and reviewing that permanent impressions can be made.

"Repeat" is the most important word in the teacher's guide book. "Practice makes perfect;" it is equally true and for a similar reason, that repetition makes remembrance. No teacher experiences so much difficulty in enabling his pupils to comprehend a lesson, as he does in impressing it upon their memories after it has been explained. Memory's track, to be fit for travel, must be well beaten. Mem-

ory, like a piece of shining metal, shines more brightly the more frequently it is burnished.

Explanation affords a teacher the widest field for the display of his individuality and teaching talent, but the permanency of his teaching depends upon persistent repetition and reviewing. The old lady's rule for sweetening rhubarb: "Put in as much sugar as your conscience will allow you, and then shut your eyes and throw in a handful more," if slightly changed may be taken as a guide to teachers. We must REPEAT and REVIEW, and REVIEW and REPEAT until it seems absurd to repeat any longer, and then experience will show us the necessity for repeating and reviewing again.

**It is a mistake to be satisfied with repetition at the time of teaching.** Some teachers repeat and have their classes repeat the facts taught while teaching them, and rest contented with this. This repetition is frequently carried to such an extent as to weary the pupils and make teaching a "mechanical grind of words."

It is moreover the least effective kind of repetition. It is merely applying a second coat of paint before the first has dried. The repetition that teaches is that in which the mind retraces its steps, and familiarizes itself with what it has passed over. True reviewing does not mean a tedious "wagging of the tongue."

**It is a mistake to suppose that detecting errors is equivalent to correcting them.** Many teachers simply test the ability of their pupils to answer certain questions relating to the subject in hand. They ask the questions, and if they are missed, they mark the result on the delinquent pupils themselves, or in the conduct and work register. Sometimes both methods of *marking* are adopted. The teacher seems to think that his whole duty is performed when he has wisely shaken his head and said "next," or "wrong," or passed the question to some other pupil. It is not enough to show the pupil that he does not know the answer or understand the subject.

To say, as a teacher once did to a boy,

"You don't know nuthin'" is not a very good educative process. To show a pupil that he does not know a thing is often a necessary part of the teacher's duty, but it is never his *whole duty*. He must make the pupil correct his error by some method. If possible the pupil who makes the mistake should be led to see his own error, and to think out the correct solution of the difficulty himself, or find the answer in his text book by study. The more independent the pupil can be of the teacher in this respect the better. Indeed, the teacher's whole duty may be said to consist in aiding his pupils to become independent men and women, capable of grasping the problems of life, and of solving them in a proper manner. He can best do this by making them correct their own errors themselves. However, the errors *must be corrected*, whatever be the method of doing so. The teacher is not a mere machine for testing the accuracy of answers, applying appropriate(?) punishments, and marking results. If one or two or more pupils miss in answering,

they should each repeat the right answer before another question is asked.

**It is a mistake to be satisfied with one correction of an error.** The teacher should repeat and re-repeat the questions that have been missed. He should not, of course, repeat a question several times in succession. Time will not admit of consecutive repetition by the same individual. If several members of a class have failed to answer a question properly, it is quite right occasionally to have the answer given in rapid succession a few times by the class simultaneously. When an error has been made and corrected by the pupil who made it, the same question should be given again to him a few minutes afterwards. Impressions are rooted, and errors eradicated by repetition. Whenever it is possible, as in spelling, composition, etc., for the pupil to make a list of the mistakes he makes, he should be required to do so. These lists should be used frequently in drills. The best spelling book a pupil can have, is a list of the words he has spelled inaccurately. The best pro-

nouncing dictionary he can have, is a list of the words he has mispronounced in reading or in conversation with his teacher.

**It is a mistake to try to teach too many points in a single lesson.** Many teachers seem to think that their ability as teachers is to be measured by the extent of ground which they can cover in a lesson. They reckon the progress of their scholars by the number of pages passed over. They measure the amount of their mathematical knowledge by the square yard. They forget that the pupils themselves have any part in the work of learning. The teacher gives information, the pupil receives it. The result of teaching depends much more on the receiving than the giving. It is measured, not by what the pupils hear, but by what they carry with them from the class-room, and apply in future life.

The facts stated by the teacher or drawn by him from the pupils should be repeated simultaneously by the class, and drilled upon persistently by the teacher, *while the lesson is in progress.* "Questioning in" is

the grandest method of the trained and cultured teacher in teaching new facts or thoughts; "questioning out" is the only certain way of fastening them firmly in the mind. Drill when about three facts have been communicated, however simple they may be; then give three additional facts and drill over the six, and so on to the close of the lesson. This repetition drill should be more thorough toward the close of the lesson. It should be varied as much as possible. The answering should be partly simultaneous and partly individual, and always brisk and lively.

**It is a mistake to be indefinite in teaching.** In teaching map geography for instance, many teachers place the pointer on the map in a sort of hap-hazard manner, when indicating the position of a place. The point, and the point only, should be held firmly at the spot where the place is situated. If this be not done, the knowledge given will be inaccurate, and habits of carelessness and superficial study will be formed by the pupils. One of the most important lessons we can teach in

school is thoroughness. Knowledge is valuable only when it is reliable. Be accurate first, even if you have to make apparently slow progres. Be sure that one idea is clearly understood and impressed before you proceed with another. Avoid ambiguous expressions. Correct them when used by your pupils either orally or in their composition.

**It is a mistake to devote attention chiefly to the smart pupils in a class.** Too often the teacher neglects the duller pupils in order to sweep triumphantly on with those who are more brilliant. The temptation to do so is great, even without the additional stimulus given by comparison of results of test examinations. Such a course is manifestly unfair, however, as the teacher is aiding those who least require assistance, and neglecting those who most need help. Archibishop Whately relates that "a certain gardener always outstripped his competitors by taking the highest prizes for gooseberries. Time after time he had been successful. The reason of his success was a secret which

his rivals determined to learn. They accordingly watched him from an ambush and found that he carefully stripped his best bushes early in the season of all but a few of their largest berries. He thus obtained berries of a very great size; but he only raised a few quarts from bushes which would have produced a large quantity of berries." Teachers should remember that they should aim to give to all their pupils the highest and best culture possible to them under the circumstances in which they are placed, and not merely to develop a few "prize gooseberries."

**It is a mistake to give information to young children whih they cannot use at once.** This is not the way in which they learned before they went to school, and they learned more rapidly then, and remembered what they learned better, than they ever do afterwards. They acquired knowledge by contact with things, and they *used the knowledge gained at once.* When the pupil can give the *sound* of two letters he should form and name the words that can be made with them. Another let-

ter should then be *sounded*, and several new words can be formed by combining the three leetters, and so on. Even if the fossilized "alphabetical" method is used,it is absurd to keep the child droning at the twenty-six letters when long sentences might be prepared by using only a few of them. Whatever method of teaching *word recognition* be used, pupils should *read* a line as soon as they can name the words it contains. Most teachers are contented with word naming throughout the whole of the first reading book. This is a mistake; word naming is not reading. Pupils should not be compelled to go through the drudgery of learning the whole of the tables in arithmetic before they put a part of them in practice. They should apply the simpler portions of the addition and multiplication tables for instance, before completing the whole tables. The teacher must of course carefully avoid any work involving a knowledge of the tables beyond the pupils' acquirements. Pupils are frequently compelled to count their fingers by the thoughtlessness of teachers who scold them for it.

**It is a mistake to use objects in reviewing or drilling.** Objects should be used in giving the ideas at first, but not in repeating afterwards. The pupils should deal with the abstractions as soon as they have been clearly conceived by the aid of the real things. In addition for instance, it is necessary that the child should learn the sum of seven and nine first by means of balls, or beans, or some objects, but having clearly learned the fact that seven things added to nine things of the same kind make sixteen things, he should only add the numbers 9 and 7 in future. The objects enable a teacher to communicate a lesson more easily than he could do without them,but once the lesson has been learned the objects are only fetters which prevent the freest development of the mind.

**It is a mistake to accept partial answers.** It is well to insist that pupils should give their answers in the form of complete sentences. The best language lessons are the practical lessons given in oral composition in the general work of

the school-room. Good speaking is not taught by rules but by correcting the errors made in conversation, errors in pronunciation as well as in grammar. The pupils should express their ideas, therefore, at all times in the form of complete sentences, to accustom them to the formation of sentences which accurately express their thoughts. This will give the teacher his best opportunity for removing errors.

Questions whose answers can be given by a single *name* or *date* need not be answered as above directed.

Give the date of the battle of Hastings.

The date of the battle of Hastings is 1066 A. D.

Name the commander of the British forces at Waterloo.

Wellington was the commander of the British forces at Waterloo.

To answer these and similar questions in complete sentences is a waste of time, without compensation in the way of development.

The rule that should guide the teacher in this matter is: whenever the answer

expresses a thought of the pupil, it should be expressed in his own language in the form of a sentence. Mere repetition of the question with the addition of a word or a date is of little benefit.

**It is a mistake to repeat every answer.** Teachers often acquire the habit of repeating an answer insensibly as it is given by a pupil. This is simply a waste of time. Indeed, this method of killing time is resorted to by many designedly. They repeat the answer to one question while preparing to ask another. This should not be necessary. The teacher's questions should be ready, or the answering will be slow and the attention unsettled. Occasionally it may be wise to repeat the answer in order to impress it on the minds of the other members of the class, or to emphasize some essential part.

**It is a mistake to have a stereotyped plan of presenting a subject.** It is necessary to successful teaching that the teacher should prepare his lessons, not his subjects merely, carefully beforehand,

He should also arrange the general plan of his lesson. This will prevent his wandering while teaching. His plan should be elastic, however, so as to allow him to adapt it to the circumstances that may arise, or the questions that may be asked while teaching. The bones of the plan should not be seen. The more variety the teacher can give to the method of presenting a subject the greater will be the interest taken in it by the pupils.

**It is a mistake to talk too much while teaching.** Some teachers are very fond of "airing their knowledge of the lesson." If a teacher talks a great deal he is either too diffuse in the treatment of his subject, or he offers his pupils more thought than they can properly digest. It is not possible for a class to attend hour after hour and day after day to a teacher who gives them no share in the work of learning but as listeners. He is the best teacher who can stimulate his pupils with fewest words to greatest mental activity and interest in their lessons. Most of the talking should be done by the pupils as

guided or led by the teacher. If the teacher talks too much he wearies himself as well as his class. Let the talking be reduced to the minimum, and the working increased to the maximum extent possible.

**It is a mistake to use too many long words in teaching.** Great thoughts are best expressed in simple language. Those who teach children must use plain, familiar words or they will be misunderstood. All teachers are liable to forget the change that has taken place in their own mental development since they were children. The minds of pupils are frequently confused because their teachers take it for granted that they understand the meaning of words with whose use they are unacquainted.

The teacher should be as correct a model as possible in his language. It should be simple, carefully chosen, appropriate, and accurate as regards pronunciation and grammatical construction.

**It is a mistake to give words before ideas.** Many teachers and parents object to the use of such words as "parallelogram,

triangle, peninsula," etc., by young children, on the plea that they are beyond their comprehension. That depends on how the child has been taught. If it has learned what a triangle is by actually handling triangles, and becomes familiar with their distinguishing characteristics by using them, then it will use the word "triangle" as intelligently as the word "chair." The child five years of age uses many words in its ordinary conversation, which are in themselves more difficult to spell and utter than those above named. The *name* of a thing is always a matter of *secondary* importance to a child. What the thing *is* or *does* is of supremest interest to it. If this can be learned, and especially if it can be learned practically, the name will give no trouble either to the memory or to the vocal organs. Without the idea, the name is a mere sound with no educative power.

**It is a mistake to try to make difficulties too simple.** The duty of a teacher in teaching is held by some to consist in simplicity of explanation. The teacher

is to make mild and sweetened decoctions of knowledge, and give them in homœopathic doses to the pupils. When the scholars meet with any rocks in their pathway, he is to remove them. Instead of allowing them to climb the hill of knowledge, he is told to level the hill and even make a good road across the plain *for their accommodation.* The teachers who act on this principle necessarily dwarf the minds of their pupils.

The teacher should aim :

1. To make the pupils *get over difficulties themselves.*

2. To present the difficulties of a subject in *their proper order, in a series of natural steps.*

3. To *graduate the steps* to suit the ages and advancement of the classes. They should be very small indeed at first.

4. To *avoid giving explanation* as far as possible. Explain the nature of the *materials for thought* which are presented in the text books or in other ways; do not do the thinking for the pupils.

5. When explanation is necessary it should be *clear, definite* and *brief.*

**It is a mistake to neglect any opportunity for making the pupils do as much as possible in learning.** One of the fundamental principles of Froebel's system of education is, *children learn by doing.* "Children in the Kindergarten learn *to observe*, because they are constantly *trying* to reproduce." They learn the characteristics and relations of things by actually handling them. They cannot, therefore, learn superficially, and superficial teaching in the public schools afterwards will never satisfy them.

The *eye* has been lauded to such an extent as a means of education, that many teachers have received very erroneous ideas in regard to its true function. "We learn through the eye," "cultivate the eye," "teach pupils to observe," &c., &c., are rules which have been given forth as summaries of the whole art of teaching. The eye is by far the most important of all the senses, from an educational standpoint, but it must be remembered *that the senses at best are merely servants of the mind.* They convey impressions to the brain, but the accu-

racy, the intensity, and the permanency of these impressions depend upon the brain itself. The senses do not mould thought; they supply the materials from which thoughts are formed. They carry to the brain an infinite number of impressions to which it pays little or no attention. Unless the mind assumes a receptive attitude, thought is not developed at all, and even if thoughts are formed in the mind, *they do not remain there unless they are used.* To require pupils *to learn by doing* is the only method which absolutely demands the fulfilment of all the conditions necessary to secure clearness and permanency of thought. The attention is thus fixed, and the brain does not merely receive impressions but moulds them into thoughts which it uses at once in performing the work. Knowledge should be not only acquired but applied, and whenever possible applied through the instrumentality of the hands with natural things.

At one time the teacher of chemistry was satisfied with learned statements of the facts of his subject, accompanied with

blackboard illustrations. Then actual experiments were performed in the presence of the class to illustrate and confirm the teaching. A still further step was made when the experiments preceded the explanation, and the pupils were required to notice and account for the results. Now, however, the teacher who wishes to make definite and lasting impressions, requires *each student to perform the experiments for himself*. It is only by doing this, and *by frequently repeating the same experiment* that the chemical theories will maintain themselves in the student's mind, in competition with the vast accumulation of thoughts which are forced into it in practical life.

Botany is not now regarded as taught unless the student actually handles typical specimens.

A student may look for years at a map without getting a definite idea of the relations of the various parts of the countries outlined on it. For this as well as other reasons good teachers now depend mainly on map-sketching as a means of

teaching geography. They do not simply draw a map themselves on the black-board, but every pupil sketches the map for himself as the teaching progresses, and part by part is added to the map. If the pupils cut the forms of countries in paper or *make* them in any other way, they will find that one effort of this kind will make more lasting impressions than a dozen repetitions. It is an excellent plan to have a broad shallow box with sand or moulder's earth in it, so that the beginners in geography may actually shape for themselves the various divisions of land in learning the definitions. Continents may also be formed in this way with their mountain ranges, valleys, peninsulas, capes, etc. Wooden blocks may be used to represent cities. If the bottom of the box is painted blue it will serve to represent water. The principle of *learning by doing* is recognized by most teachers in teaching some subjects. In writing, drawing, reading, and the mathematical subjects, the pupils are allowed to perform their fair share of the work. No teacher is satisfied with merely giving them the necessary ideas. They

put the theories into practice at once. This should be done to the fullest extent possible in teaching all subjects.

**It is a mistake to tell pupils anything they should know or can be led to find out by judicious teaching.** This is the TEACHER'S GOLDEN RULE. If only this one rule was carried out, the teaching in most schools would be revolutionized. Young teachers should repeat it every morning on their way to school, and ask themselves every evening wherein they have violated it. It will form a pruning hook to cut away most of the errors in method, if it is intelligently used.

Telling is not teaching. Lecturing or sermonizing is not teaching. The teacher should lead or guide his pupils through the garden of knowledge, and show them which kinds of fruit are beneficial and which injurious; he should also show them the best means of obtaining the fruit, but he should not pluck it for them, and eat it for them, and digest it for them. He should teach his scholars how to think; he should not do the thinking for them.

This will make them develop, by giving their mental activity the work for which it so ardently longs.

Professor Tyndall says: "Looking backward from my present stand-point over the earnest past, a boyhood fond of play and physical action, but averse to school-work, lies before me. The aversion did not arise from intellectual apathy or want of appetite for knowledge, but mainly from the fact that my earliest teachers lacked the power of imparting vitality to what they taught."

No wonder that little fellows with so many germs of life and power in them waiting to be stirred into activity and vigor, should have an aversion to attend such a school. If a teacher is not acquainted with the wonderful nature of the mind he has to develop, and the natural order of the growth of its faculties, he should be very tolerant of truancy. The temptation to play "hookey" may sometimes come from imprisoned faculties protesting against their most unjust neglect. Certain it is that, independent of

the most evil effects resulting from known disobedience, a boy would learn more in the fields and woods with the flowers and birds, than in many a school.

Sir William Hamilton says, "The primary principle of education is the determination of the pupil to self-activity—the doing nothing for him which he is able to do for himself."

Herbert Spencer says, "In education the process of self-development should be encouraged to the fullest extent. Children should be led to make their own investigations and to draw their own inferences. They should be *told* as little as possible, and induced to *discover* as much as possible. Self-evolution guarantees a vividness and permanency of impression which the usual methods can never produce. Any piece of knowledge which the pupil has himself acquired, any problem which he has himself solved, becomes by virtue of the conquest much more thoroughly his than it could else be. The preliminary activity of mind which his success implies, the concentration of

thought necessary to it, and the excitement consequent on his triumph conspire to register all the facts in his memory in a way that no mere information heard from a teacher or read in a school book, can be registered. Even if he fail the tension to which his faculties have been wound up, insures his remembrance of the solution when given to him, better than half a dozen repetitions would. Observe again, that this discipline necessitates a continuous organization of the knowledge he acquires. It is in the very nature of facts and inferences, assimilated in this normal manner, that they successively become the premises of further conclusions — the means of solving still further questions. The solution of yesterday's problem helps the pupil in mastering to-day's. Thus knowledge is turned into a *faculty* as soon as it is taken in, and forthwith aids in the general function of thinking—does not lie merely written in the pages of an *internal library*, as when rote learnt."

Fellenberg held, "That the individual, independent activity of the pupil is of

much greater importance than the ordinary busy officiousness of many who assume the office of educators."

Rosenkranz says, "Mind is essentially self-activity. Mind lets nothing act upon it unless it has rendered itself receptive to it."

Horace Mann wrote, "Unfortunately education amongst us at present consists too much in *telling*, not in training."

Let the pupils have a chance to enjoy the pleasure of *discovering* for themselves and school will be to them not a prison, but a temple of joy. How children delight in overcoming a difficulty! How much greater is their satisfaction when they overcome it without aid from the teacher! The honor is then entirely their own. What a difference there is, too, in the results of teaching, when the pupil is allowed to do his own share of the work! If an infant were always carried in arms, it would never learn to walk. Each little effort it makes for itself gives new power and vigor to its muscles. So the child that is lifted over every obstacle by

the strong mental arm of its teacher will become mentally crippled, and dependent upon others. It will lean if it is trained to do so; and when it has to go forth into the world without its teacher for a helper, it will be unable to surmount the difficulties in its path. A pupil can never forget a fact learned practically, as the result of his own investigation. One boy learns by actually mixing yellow and blue colors that they form green, and *discovers* the effects of all the primary colors in forming secondary colors. Another is *told* the results of the combinations of the primary colors. He may even have these results exhibited by means of the most ingenious and elaborately colored charts. The results in the two cases will be vastly different. The second boy, ten years after leaving school, may remember, after a process of thought, that red and blue produce purple. The first does not need to go through any processs of reasoning. He is not *conscious* of an effort in remembering. He knows it as he knows his name; that he has two hands, ten toes, etc.; that the weather is cold in winter; or as he knows

any of a thousand and one facts which he has learned for himself practically.

There is more unnecessary *telling* done in teaching arithmetic than any other subject. Long, hard, unmeaning rules are memorized, often without even being explained by the teacher. The pupil is told to multiply at a certain time by a certain number, and then divide by something else, and so on, and he will get the answer. The class reaches a new exercise, say addition of fractions, and the teacher proceeds to show them how to do the work. He writes on the blackboard $\frac{7}{8}+\frac{5}{12}$, and says, frequently with his back to the class, "Now the L. C. M. of 8 and 12 is 24. 8 into 24 goes 3 times; $3\times7=\frac{21}{24}$. 12 into 24 goes twice; $2\times5=\frac{10}{24}$. Then $\frac{21}{24}+\frac{10}{24}=\frac{31}{24}=1\frac{7}{24}$. How many think they can *do* another like that?" And an example is given them on which they experiment. This is not an exaggerated specimen. The teacher does all. No use is made of the knowledge already possessed by the pupils. They are not asked whether the things to be added have the same name or not,

whether they can add numbers of different denominations or not, so as to show the necessity for reducing the fraction to a common denominator How easy it would be to ask the pupils to add £6 and 4s, to lead them to see that before adding them together they would have to be changed to the same name. How natural then to make the step from *pounds* and *shillings* to *eighths* and *twelfths*. This point having been reached by the class without any *telling* by the teacher, why should he do the work of reducing to a common denominator? The pupils can do this before they reach addition. Having done the reduction and obtained $\frac{21}{24}+\frac{10}{24}$ they should be told to add the two. No doubt more than half the class will obtain $\frac{31}{48}$ as the answer. How can they be led to see their error? Will it not do for the teacher to say "We never add the denominators?" Certainly not. Perhaps the best way to prevent such a mistake is to ask the class to write down $\frac{21}{24}$ in some other way. After a little thought one at least will suggest 21 *twenty-fourths*. This fact clearly understood, that the denominator is merely the *name*, and

that it can be written in *letters* as well as *figures*, one-half the difficulty in teaching fractions is removed. Having got this from the class, the example should be written down thus on the board: 21 *twenty-fourths* / 10 *twenty-fourths* and another placed beside it, such as 21 *apples* / 10 *apples*. Then ask the class, if they would add the *letters in the names* of the things to be added? The result will be gratifying. The class will not add *names* again.

To reduce a mixed number to an improper fraction the pupils are *told* to "multiply the whole number by the denominator and add in the numerator, and under the result place the denominator." When they can repeat this to them meaningless sentence, the teacher places an example on the board, and, without even questioning his class to make them apply the rule they have learned, he proceeds to "do" it. He says, $8\frac{3}{7}$; $8 \times 7 = 56 + 3 = 59$; now put 7 under the 59 and we get the answer $\frac{59}{7}$. Why not let the class see that they

are merely to work a simple example in reduction descending, the principles of which they learned long ago? To do so is only necessary to write down an example thus: $\overset{\text{Wholes.}}{8} \;.\; \overset{\text{Sevenths.}}{3}$. It is then exactly similar to reducing $\overset{\text{lbs.}}{8} \;.\; \overset{\text{oz.}}{3}$ to ounces. The method of solution can then be *drawn from the class*, as well as the reason for putting the denominator under the answer. Writing 7 *under* 59 is merely an *abbreviation* to save writing "sevenths" after it.

Subtraction of *mixed numbers*, should in a similar way be explained to the classs to be a form of compound subtraction.

In reduction of denominate fractions the *rules* and *telling* are even worse than in any of the cases mentioned. When it is necessary to reduce $\frac{3}{7}$ of a £ to the fraction of a farthing, instead of giving a long rule absolutely without any living meaning to a child, why not say, If you had three pounds to reduce to farthings, what would you first do? "Multiply by 20 to reduce the pounds to shillings." Then do the same with fractions as with whole

numbers. Multiply first by 20. But which shall we multiply, the 3 or the 7? What is the 7? "The *name* of the fraction." Would you multiply the *name?* "No, not the name, but the number." Reduction descending in fractions will require no further explanation, and no rule need be given other than the rule given in dealing with whole numbers.

In reduction ascending a similar course may be adopted. Get the pupils to make the rule for fractions by basing it on the rule already taught for whole numbers. For example reduce $\frac{3}{7}$ of a farthing to the fraction of a pound. What would you first do if this was a whole number? "Divide by 4." What part of a number do you take when you divide by 4? "The one-fourth." If we take the $\frac{1}{4}$ of a number then, what do we really do to it? "We divide it by 4." Then if I take $\frac{1}{4}$ of $\frac{3}{7}$ do I divide it by 4?" "Yes." Let us indicate the work and we have $\frac{1}{4}$ of $\frac{3}{7}$. To divide this by 12, we take $\frac{1}{12}$ of it, and so on. When all the work is indicated, we have a compound fraction, which the pupils of

course already know how to reduce to a simple one.

These few examples in fractions have been selected because it is in this subject that many teachers do their most meaningless teaching. Similar errors are committed all through the arithmetic. The pupils are *told* that 16 ozs. make a lb., instead of being set to work to find out the fact for themselves with a pair of scales. They are *informed* that 12 inches make one foot, etc., instead of being compelled to discover for themselves, by actual examination and comparison of the measures, the relations of the various lengths to each other. The "compound rules" and reductions are unfathomable mysteries to most children, because they are *told* to follow certain formal rules, instead of being allowed first to perform the various operations with actual money, or measures, and then to do mentally or on the slate the work which they have been doing with the real things.

It may be well to caution the teacher against the idea that he has nothing to do

but remain an idle observer when pupils are making their discoveries. They must not be left to their own ingenuity in making experiments to arrive at certain conclusions. The teacher must be the guide, and the source from which information should mainly flow. He should not make them mere receptacles for information, however, he should see to it that each fact is used as it is received.

## CHAPTER IV.

### MISTAKES IN MANNER.

**It is a mistake to scold.** To do so merely irritates a class at first, and excites their ridicule and contempt afterwards. No person tells the exact truth when he scolds; and it is a bad thing for a teacher to get credit for making unjust accusation, or saying what he does not really mean.

**It is a mistake to threaten.** Penalties should be learned practically. If a teacher makes threats that a certain punishment shall follow the doing of certain things, he robs himself of one of the highest prerogatives—the power of adjusting punishment to the peculiar circumstances of each individual case. The very making of a threat erects a barrier between the teacher and his class which prevents sympathy

between them. It clearly implies that he doubts their honesty and purpose.

**It is a mistake to grumble.** Pupils may occasionally deserve censure. Their intentional faults should always be corrected and the errors resulting from accident or inexperience should always be clearly and fearlessly pointed out. They will not improve either in lessons or conduct so long as they are not shown to be defective in these respects. Grumbling is, however, quite a different matter. Complaining soon becomes a habit, and when done mechanically it loses its effect. Martin Luther says, "I blame those teachers who make of their schools a place of torture and misery, and never cease to blame their pupils instead of instructing them."

**It is a mistake to be hasty.** He who loses control of himself loses at the same time the power to control others. The man of calm, even temper, who holds his head erect, walks in a dignified manner, looks unembarrassed, and speaks deliberately, rarely has any trouble in managing a school. The confident man is ever cool.

"Excitability and haste weaken the teacher's influence; impair the accuracy of his judgment; complicate his administration of discipline; occasion positive injustice; and stimulate and strengthen both by example and direct collision the fierce passions of the pupils."

**It is a mistake to show lack of animation or enthusiasm.** Lifeless teaching does not secure attention or stimulate mental activity. The pupils will insensibly grow like the teacher. The men and women who accomplish great good are those who have energy and enthusiasm. Let the teacher be in earnest; let him show that he believes what he does to be worth doing well. The "unconscious tuition" of good teachers is often the best gift they give their pupils.

The teacher must not mistake a noisy, fussy, demonstrative manner for enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is earnestness without undue excitement.

**It is a mistake to be cold and formal.** No teacher can succeed without the *sympathy* of his class. To secure this the teach-

er must be ever *genial* and *cheerful*, as well as *straightforward*. The sunshine of a teacher's face, and the "song-shine" of his tone and words, can penetrate the darkest recesses of a child's nature, and they often develop germs of power and beauty of character which would have died for lack of nourishment or grown to be but sickly plants in the darkness. The winds of censure, scolding and grumbling, and the barren hills of formality and indifference, only serve to make the timid nature of the child shrink and hide. Kindness in word and manner, a genuine interest in the thoughts, feelings and circumstances of a child, and the warmth of an affectionate nature, will bring out the tender buds of sweetness of temper and purity of heart, and make them grow into the most beautiful flowers of a noble character. A genial manner will enable the teacher to deal with the thousand petty annoyances of the school-room, without allowing them to develop into great difficulties.

**It is a mistake to assume to be immaculate.** The teacher ought to know

all that his circumstances will permit in relation to the subjects he has to teach. He ought also to study the subjects related to them, so that he may not have to show his lack of general knowledge too frequently. He is lacking in common sense, however, if he professes to be an encyclopedia. A mere storehouse for knowledge is of little practical value. It is desirable that pupils should have a respect for the teacher's *acquirements*, but it is of much greater consequence that they have a profound veneration for his honesty. Some teachers sacrifice the good opinion of their pupils in a weak attempt to get credit for having more wisdom than they really possess. It would be much more dignified for them to acknowledge a deficiency of knowledge, than a want of candor.

The attempts made by teachers sometimes to conceal their lack of knowledge, are exceedingly ridiculous. A class in charge of a student teacher was reading Moir's poem, "To a Dying Infant," in the Provincial Model School, Toronto. The lines,—

"Yes, with the quiet dead,
Baby, thy rest shall be;
Oh! many a weary *wight*,
Weary of life and light,
Would fain lie down with thee,"

had just been read, when a boy asked the meaning of "wight." The student had evidently labored under what once was a popular delusion, that it was not necessary to prepare a *reading* lesson. It was clear that he did not know the meaning of the word; but with the assumption of the air of one who "knoweth all" and who is just considering "how best to explain it," he said, as he read it over quickly to himself in order, if possible, to catch the meaning from the context, "Wight?—ah yes—the word at the end of the line? Yes—I am glad you called my attention to it—that is a misprint, boys; it ought to be w-h-i-t-e. You see this little dying infant was a *colored* child, and the poet means that some white people are so tired of living, that they would even be willing to lie down beside a little negro to get rid of their troubles."

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